The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle.

Nude male races, Kersal Moor near Manchester

Nude male races, public hangings, 100,000 horse racing enthusiasts and 300, 000 protestors. The elusive grandstands at Kersal Moor saw it all The main race meets took place around Whitsuntide, the seventh Sunday after Easter, and brought huge crowds, with over 100,000 gathering at some events. As early as 1687, £40 prizes were given, a princely sum at the time Meanwhile, before the races came to an end the stands witnessed other events, such as in 1790 when James McNamara was publicly hanged here for a string of burglaries and robberies in the area.

In the bustling city of Manchester, nestled near its outskirts, lay the sprawling expanse of Kersal Moor. This picturesque landscape was known for many things, but above all, it was etched in the history books for its grand races and the eccentricities that unfolded within its elusive grandstands.
Every year, as Whitsuntide approached, anticipation hung in the air like a palpable fog. The seventh Sunday after Easter marked the arrival of the main race meets, attracting horse racing enthusiasts from far and wide. They flocked to Kersal Moor like pilgrims, their hearts filled with an insatiable thirst for excitement and the thrill of competition. The allure of the races was such that it drew over a hundred thousand spectators to witness the equine prowess displayed on the track.
The history of the races at Kersal Moor was steeped in tradition. Even as early as 1687, when the world was a different place, the allure of the sport was evident. It was said that £40 prizes were awarded to the victors, a princely sum that commanded respect and admiration. These races were not just about the thrill of the chase; they were a celebration of skill, determination, and the undying spirit of competition.
However, beyond the thunderous hooves and the cheering crowds, the grandstands of Kersal Moor bore witness to events far beyond the realm of horse racing. It was a place where the ordinary mingled with the extraordinary, where the mundane brushed shoulders with the macabre.
In the year 1790, as the races reached their climax, the grandstands were shrouded in an air of gloom. James McNamara, a notorious criminal known for a string of burglaries and robberies that had plagued the area, had met his fateful end. His crimes had reached such infamy that the public demanded justice, and justice was served on the very grounds where dreams were born.
The day of the execution dawned with a solemnity that contrasted sharply with the usual revelry that filled the air. The vibrant colours of jockeys' silks gave way to a somber palette, as a hushed crowd gathered to witness the final chapter of McNamara's turbulent life. He stood tall and defiant, his fate sealed by the weight of his transgressions. The murmurs of the onlookers mingled with the rustling of leaves, creating an eerie symphony that echoed through the Moor.
As the noose tightened around McNamara's neck, the silence was shattered by

the collective gasp of the crowd. Life slipped away from the notorious criminal, and the grandstands bore witness to the final act of a tragic tale. It was a sobering reminder that even within the realm of frivolity and entertainment, the consequences of one's actions loomed large.

For centuries, Kersal Moor had been a stage where the extraordinary unfolded amidst the ordinary. From the nude male races that elicited both laughter and sc andal, to the public hangings that brought forth a sense of justice, it was a place where humanity's complex tapestry was woven.

Today, as the grandstands of Kersal Moor stand silently, memories of its vibrant past echo through the ages. The tales of triumph, tragedy, and everything in between are etched in its very essence, waiting to be discovered by those who dare to delve into its history.

By Donald Jay